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Oklahoma Seminoles: Medicine, Magic and Religion

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teachers. They had never permitted her to speak her own language, and she stopped speaking English so that others would not laugh at her manner of using it. She also remembered the shock of seeing Indians depicted in textbooks as bloodthirsty savages always threatening whites. This experience led Barstow to deny her tribal origins, a sociocultural problem which she had to overcome.

Vizenor's book is not filled with words lamenting the Chippewa past. Some of the most significant information in the work is associated with the spirit world, death and dreams, animals and power. One of the most intriguing excerpts is the case of Cora Katherine Sheppo, a mixed blood Chippewa who killed her grandchild because he had been "spawned by the devil." Vizenor's discussion and analysis is very "Indian" and thus very unique. His examination of Sheppo's struggle with evil forces is just one of many that will help non-Indians understand the different perspectives of Native Americans. His book is certainly an interesting contribution to Chippewa history and will be of use to anyone attracted to American Indian studies.

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

CLIFFORD E. TRAFZER

Oklahoma Seminoles: Medicine, Magic and Religion, by James W. Howard in collaboration with Willie Lena. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984. xix, 279 pp. Notes, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

James W. Howard, an anthropologist on the faculty of Oklahoma State University, presents in this volume the traditional culture extant among the Seminoles of Oklahoma. The culture and beliefs of the Oklahoma Seminoles resulted from the diffusion, after the War of 1812, of Creek culture among the Florida Seminoles. Because the Creek-Seminoles refused to remove to Oklahoma (then Indian Territory) the United States waged three wars, ending in the 1850s, against them. By far the greatest number of Seminoles arrived in Oklahoma between 1827 and 1842. When the removals from Florida ended, about 3,100 people constituted the Oklahoma Seminoles and perhaps five hundred Seminoles remained in Florida. Before describing the medicine, magic, ceremonials, dances, and games of the Seminoles, Howard writes a brief history of the tribe or nation from standard historical sources.

Willie Lena, who Howard depicts as an "arch-conservative" Seminole, provides most of the information in this book (250). Raised by culturally traditional grandparents, Lena at age twenty-four became a *heniha*, or assistant town chief, and later became a *mikko* (town

chief) of Tallahassee town. After a lifetime of inquiry among conservative Seminoles, Lena was able to relate to Howard a substantial amount of traditional Seminole culture still in practice. Much of Seminole culture has already been forgotten even by people such as Lena. He and his kinsmen have been exposed to the Euro-American world since the sixteenth century, and in the early twentieth century, whites flooded into the lands of the Oklahoma Seminoles. As with most Indian tribes or communities today, there are deeply contrasting life styles among the Seminoles who range from talented, traditional men and women who follow ancient practices and beliefs to university graduates whose only Seminole linkage is their ancestry.

Howard carefully describes the healing properties of sixty-five plants known to Lena. He usually accompanies these descriptions of plants and herbs with a commentary based on the plant usages of neighboring tribes which botanists or earlier anthropologists noted. Seminole medicine men also use non-herbal remedies to cure physical and mental infirmities; from personal observations, Howard presents a detailed account of the four-day Seminole green corn ceremony. This key Seminole ritual renews the sacred fire, provides the occasion for young men's acceptance into their clans, maintains the good will of animals, fulfills the purification rites required before men can eat the new season's corn, and brings to the people prosperity and well-being. Other chapters describe ceremonial and social dances, sports and games, the Seminole world (a brief look at family life), hunting lore, the Seminole world view, and burial rites.

Only in a two-page epilogue does Howard's judgment about Seminole life appear. He concludes: "I suspect that the immediate future will see the Seminoles turning more and more to a 'Pan-Indian' basis of self-identification. By this I mean that instead of devoting their energies toward the maintenance of strictly Seminole cultural forms . . . the younger generation will turn toward cultural forms which, though American Indian, are inter-tribal or non-tribal in nature" (249-250). For the most part, however, Howard recounts Willie Lena's knowledge or his own observations in the manner of Franz Boaz or A. L. Kroeber, whose anthropological descriptions of Indian life and culture contain few evaluative judgments. Yet since this volume views Seminole life and culture only through the eyes and art of Lena and the observations of Howard, it has a text untroubled by the inconsistencies and ambiguities of a number of informants. While this volume will not have a wide audience among historians, it will serve anthropologists well because of its careful descriptions of Seminole medicine, magic, and religion.

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